

Legislative Budget Cuts Target Rural Alaska PCE, Public Safety, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Targeted

Now is the Time to Speak Out as Final Decisions Are Made in Juneau

May 2, 2002

Now is the Time

Contact Your Legislator

Phone: Call your local legislative information office

Email your legislator:

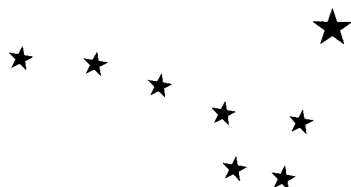
- Representative_Firstname_Last name@legis.state.ak.us
- Senator_Firstname_Last name@legis.state.ak.us

Raise your objections to legislative budget cuts with your legislator and the six budget negotiators:

Senator Dave Donley, R-Anchorage
Senator Pete Kelly, R-Fairbanks
Senator Lyman Hoffman, D-Bethel
Rep. Eldon Mulder, R-Anchorage
Rep. Bill Williams, R-Ketchikan
Rep. John Davies, D-Fairbanks

Details on the Cuts

For details on proposed cuts for each region-by-region and department, visit the Office of Management and Budget web site:
<http://www.gov.state.ak.us/omb/akomb.htm>



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Vital public services from road maintenance to child protection are on the chopping block under separate versions of next year's state budget passed by the House and Senate. The few days remaining in the legislative session until the May 14th adjournment is the only opportunity to influence final budget decisions. Instead of risking Alaskans' safety and economic good health, Gov. Knowles wants to hold the line on services for the coming year. The Governor's budget calls for modest but strategic investments for the education, health and safety of Alaska's children.

Legislative budget negotiators are making final operating budget decisions in the next few days. Let them know now you support vital public services for Alaska.

Here are some of the proposed cuts that do the most harm to rural public services:

- **Head Start cut** – Senate eliminates \$500,000 in state funds that would capture additional federal funds to enroll more children into this proven program that prepares children for success in school and in life.
- **No funding for Power Cost Equalization** - So far, the Senate operating budget does not include any funding for PCE.
- **Village Public Safety Officer support cut** – At least one trooper who provides direct assistance to VPSOs is eliminated by the House.
- **Fire prevention worsened** - Even though Alaska has three times the national average of deaths from fire, cuts would reduce building inspections for fire prevention.
- **Tribal relations not funded** – Legislature refuses to fund Governor's proposed Tribal Affairs Office to improve government-to-government relations between the federally recognized tribes and the state, and to continue implementation of the Millennium Agreement.
- **School accountability hampered** – Cuts would hamper development of the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam and other important tests to measure student progress.
- **Fewer suicide prevention grants** – 19 communities across the state will no longer receive suicide prevention grants, under Senate budget cuts.
- **Child protection lessened** – An innovative community program for investigating reports of harm will not be expanded to Bethel, Fairbanks and Kenai.
- **Alcohol and drug abuse treatment slashed** - Senate cuts current alcohol and drug programs by \$2.4 million, especially harming rural treatment programs.
- **Fisheries programs eliminated** – Cuts eliminate all state funding for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands crab fishery, resulting in the loss of state core management of a large portion of Alaska's commercial seafood production. The elimination of state support for the commercial fisheries genetics program will effectively dismantle a world class genetics lab which conducts statewide genetic stock identification research and evaluation.
- **Public Assistance reduced** – Cuts to public assistance programs will require elimination of positions across the state, including Bethel.
- **No improvement for Juvenile Justice** – Additional juvenile probation officers in Barrow, Kodiak, Dillingham and four urban locations would have worked with the communities to help prevent youth from re-offending.
- **Community Health Grants reduced** – Cuts to the Pre-maternal Homes in Nome and Kotzebue mean they'll have to reduce services or find outside funding. Support for hearing, language and vision services for Norton Sound and Maniilaq are eliminated, resulting in learning problems for children and impaired communication or mobility for adults and elders.